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Pushing Boundaries: Female Sexuality From World War II to the Sexual Revolution

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PUSHING BOUNDARIES:
FEMALE SEXUALITY FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

By

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B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2012

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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TITLE: PUSHING BOUNDARIES: FEMALE SEXUALITY FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Patrick Dilley

This paper explores female sexual behavior beginning at World War II up to the beginning of the sexual revolution. It also examines the different ways in which government, educational, legal, and social reform authorities attempted to control females through various laws, policies, and educational structures. The purpose of this paper is to explain how girls and women were adapting to and challenging traditional standards of sexuality in mid-twentieth century America. Throughout World War II and the decades following, girls and women continued to push the boundaries of traditional sexuality and, although often not directly, challenged many authorities' attempts at control. As the boundaries between private and public matters became increasingly ambiguous, social and sexual transitions occurred that ultimately led to what has become known as the sexual revolution.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

World War II brought about significant changes in the United States. Often times, the focus of the history of the country during those years is given to the positive war efforts and sacrifices of men and women. There is, however, another story to be told. As thousands of men were deployed overseas or sent off to military training camps, women's role within society began to shift in response to changing needs. They began to take on new roles in the public sphere, including working in previously male-dominated positions in factories, shipyards, and defense plants. These women are often praised (and rightfully so) as the "Rosie the Riveters" of the war (Hegarty 2008; Winchell, 2008). Many women, though, had a vastly different experience from the positive patriot displayed in wartime propaganda.

A number of terms, including patriotute, victory girls, and khaki-wackies, were used to label amateur women who participated in sexual activity with servicemen. The increasingly loose sexual boundaries between unmarried men and women led to a type of panic amongst government and military officials and social reform authorities. The threat of venereal disease, and thus the threat to men's health, further exacerbated their fears (Bailey, 1999; Hegarty, 2008; Winchell, 2008). Although men engaged in sexual intercourse with women, it was considered the woman's responsibility to abstain from engaging in intercourse with men. For this reason, several different federal agencies developed policies to better control promiscuous women (Hegarty, 2008; Littauer, 2015).

As the war came to a close, Americans desperately sought normalcy after years of chaos. Normalcy, as many saw it, included traditional gender roles for men and women, with increased focus on the family. The military men returned to their girlfriends, fiancés, and wives and

expected them to be the same women they left behind, but having experienced life in the public sphere, many began to resent domesticity (Israel, 2001). For nearly two decades following World War II, married women remained silent in their discontentment, allowing cultural mores and beliefs to regulate their behavior and confine them to their lives in the home.

Throughout these years, a new teenage culture was beginning to emerge (Adams, 1997; Moran, 2000; Schrum, 2004; Spurlock 2016). The early twentieth century standard of courtship known as calling had all but disappeared, and the more public courting style of dating and going steady replaced the call. These types of relationships offered youths new opportunities to explore their sexualities. As they were more serious and much more committed, even girls who previously would abstain from any form of sexual behavior could neck and pet more freely; with new freedoms, however, brought a more complicated double standard. In order to be popular and get dates, girls were expected to go so far sexually, but not too far (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Spurlock, 2016)

These changes created tension amongst moral authorities and as Miriam G. Reumann stated,

Experts rang a series of alarms: traditional morality was being ignored as new sexual license swept the land; gender differences seemed to be blurring, as men were becoming increasingly passive and sexually troubled while women grew more sexually demanding; the institution of marriage was troubled; and same-sex behavior was increasing. (2005, p. 18)

As with the venereal disease worries of wartime, authorities responded to these panics by attempting to continually control female sexuality through sex education in schools and the

limitation of contraception and abortion and applying strict rules to young female college students (May, 2010).

During the first years of the 1960s, it became obvious that the sexual standards and social expectations for women were not as willingly accepted as before. The release of texts such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) offered women a voice; they were unhappy in their stifled, domesticated lives and wanted change (Coontz, 2011). It was during these years that young men and women began to overtly challenge and reject the rules and social mores that limited their social and sexual freedom.

CHAPTER 2

World War II and Female Sexuality

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States officially entered the war, thousands of men were deployed overseas each day while many others were stationed at training camps across the country. Out of necessity, women began taking over previously male-dominated positions, including working in factories, shipyards, and defense plants (Hegarty, 2008). Although women were making significant positive contributions to the war efforts, it was their sexuality that became a common topic of discussion amongst military and civilian authorities. Much of the literature surrounding women during World War II focuses on women in industry, family life, and military services and largely ignores those women who sought sexual liberation and freedom through promiscuity, casual sexual encounters, and a wide range of sexual interactions. These women faced a nearly impossible set of conflicting messages. For an odd slip of time, a vast majority of the female population was effectively single (Israel, 2002), and although they might not have directly challenged sexual mores, these young women left a legacy of “sexual self-assertion that would generate both conservative and liberal responses in the postwar years, inspiring calls for female autonomy during the ‘sexual revolution’ to come” (Littauer, 2015, p. 19).

There are conflicting beliefs amongst historians as to whether there was a surge in sexual behavior during World War II and the decades following it. Reliable data is sparse. Analyzing the pregnancy rates of unmarried teens and the number of cases of venereal disease in the same age group indicate the strong possibility that the sexual behaviors that resulted in such occurrences were also increasing. For example, “census data reveals that premarital pregnancies more than doubled between the early 1940s and the late 1950s” (Littauer, 2015, p. 113). As the

nation began to mobilize and the population distribution in cities began to change, women of all age, including teenagers sought freedom and escape from their lives by traveling across the country, usually to larger cities. Teenage girls ran away from home at increasingly high rates (Littauer, 2015). The new landscape of America offered teen girls and young women new opportunities to explore their sexuality and engage sexually with young men. Government officials feared increased female sexuality as a threat to the nation,

The wartime state's interpretation of sexuality and gender produced a monolithic discourse around a category 'woman': she was imbued with sex; she was all sex; she was a dangerous individual capable of destroying male health and thus the nation's strength. (Hegarty, 2008, pp. 40-41)

In the eyes of the government, women were dangerous and had to be controlled. At this time, sex was not used as a direct weapon to challenge authority; yet, it is obvious that sex had the ability to change and shape American culture.

Their new role in society, in tandem with young men's risk of life, offered women "new opportunities and justifications for illicit sex" (Reumann, 2005, p. 18). Government officials believed uncontrolled female sexual behavior and the spread of venereal disease through casual sexual encounters, particularly near military training camps, posed a threat to the health of men in the armed forces, and therefore, the safety of the country. In response to this threat and changing sexual mores in the country, "government, military, and medical authorities as well as social reform authorities began to develop plans to protect the wartime state and male health that attempted to control dangerous female sexuality" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 13). The key purpose of these plans, to identify and control "bad girls," was not made public; it was structured as a campaign to control venereal disease and, by extension, the health of the nation (Hegarty, 2008).

The line between what was considered prostitution and what was considered promiscuity became increasingly ambiguous and as a result, many women found themselves confronted by legal authorities due to their sexual behavior.

To further complicate matters, many government and military officials attempted to exploit female sexuality as a means to boost military morale. For example, servicemen were encouraged to spend time at the 3,035 United Service Organization's (USO) clubs where they could spend their time with "good girls" (Spurlock, 2016). The young women employed at these clubs were considered to be pure, respectable females who "would do the essential ego-boosting work for the armed forces yet who would say 'no' to sex" (Winchell, 2008). The line between sexualized patriotic duties and dangerous promiscuity was very thin.

Women received a double message with a complex sexualized border zone. In one instance, a woman was a patriot, but could easily be designated a prostitute if she crossed the all-too-ambiguous boundary. The slippery parameters between the two led to the government coined term, patriotute. Combining the words patriot and prostitute signified the instability of the boundaries for women's sexuality (Leder, 2009). Additional terms used by the SPD to discriminate against women and girls associated with servicemen included,

lewd, sex offenders, disorderly girls, vagrants, predelinquent, suspected prostitute, potentially promiscuous women, chippies, possibly foolish and immoral, disease carriers, infected persons, nonadaptable, and mentally deficient [as well as] promiscuous women, grass grabbers, hordes of harlots...(and) good-time Charlottes. (Hegarty, 2008, pp.129-130, [emphasis original]).

The extensive list of terminology used to describe promiscuous women signified the SPD's growing intolerance of these women and overall aversion for any female that did not abide by traditional social standards of sexuality.

Another term, victory girls, was frequently used to describe young girls who traveled across the country, engaging in sexual relationships with young servicemen; justifying their actions by claiming it as patriotic duty (Bailey, 1999). These victory girls, involved in promiscuous sexuality, further shifted authorities viewpoints of what constituted immoral sexual behavior. These women were not prostitutes whose sexual encounters were based on commercial gain; they were young women seeking adventure and casual sex. These women, like patriotutes, had not violated legal code. This forced authorities to develop additional policies in an attempt to control female sexuality.

Promiscuity and the Threat of Venereal Disease

During World War I, it is estimated that approximately 7 million man-days of service were lost due venereal disease (VD) (Bailey, 1999). As America edged closer to possible entry into the war in Europe, many civilian and military officials became increasingly preoccupied with preserving the health of servicemen. In 1938, Congress "passed the National Venereal Disease Control Act, which provided funds for local VD clinics and diagnostic equipment to private practitioners" (Bailey, 1999, p. 24). As large numbers of men began mobilizing through out the country, the spread of venereal disease nationwide was of paramount importance. The federal government, as well as state and local governments, implemented a nationwide venereal disease campaign as a means to protect the health of men of the armed forces, specifically targeting dangerous, diseased, and/or promiscuous women. According to Hegarty, the campaign

served not only as a gendered system of domination and control but also as a rationale for official surveillance of women's activities. As mobilization for war progressed, women's increasing economic, social, and geographic mobility challenged systems of control, even if unintentionally. (2008, p. 17)

Although the hysteria over venereal disease may appear to be a moral panic masquerading as national defense, it is important to remember that these diseases were difficult to treat or cure before the development of penicillin (Bailey 1999; Hegarty, 2008). In contrast, however, the attempts at control were based almost entirely around controlling female bodies and sexuality, creating a pervasive double standard between men and women. Prostitution and promiscuity in women became the defining factors for dangerous sexuality.

In 1938, following the development of the National Venereal Disease Control Act, members of the state health department, the army, the navy, the Federal Security Agency (FSA), and the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) developed the Eight Point Agreement that set out specific measures for venereal disease control near military bases and other areas that employed servicemen. The agreement provided a variety of regulations, policies, and protocols for state and local health and police authorities, including efforts at early diagnosis and adequate treatment by the military and local health departments (Hegarty, 2008). The agreement also “called for the ‘gathering of information’ from servicemen regarding sexual contacts (with any women, not just with prostitutes), as well as reporting of this information to the appropriate authorities” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 14). The Eight Point Agreement marked “the official start of wartime sociopolitical efforts to control female sexuality” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 14), and such efforts continued throughout the decades following World War II.

Prostitution was, according to ASHA, directly linked to the VD problem, and, therefore, it was justifiable to monitor women's bodies. During World War II, additional measures were taken "to criminalize the sexual activities of this highly visible group of women" (Winchell, 2008, p. 110). On July 11, 1941, Congress passed the May Act to further control female promiscuity with men in the military. The Act made prostitution a federal offence "in military areas and defense-related areas" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 32). Shortly after the creation of the agreement, the federal government developed the Social Protection Division (SPD), which acted "as a watchdog over women's morals" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 6); Elliot Ness became the director (Hegarty, 2008; Winchell, 2008).

As director, Ness worked diligently to develop various committees and organizations to assist in the fight against venereal disease and the attempted repression of prostitution. One committee, the National Advisory Police Committee on Social Protection (NAPCSP), utilized local police departments to develop new and effective strategies to repress prostitution and control alleged female delinquency. This committee and its subcommittees created a manual to address social protection issues. A portion of this manual indicated laws that could potentially pertain to moral offenses committed by women (Hegarty, 2008).

Not everyone agreed with the strategy of the repression campaign and the subsequent acts. There were military officials who refused to comply with the regulations set forth. As a result, the SPD visited bases that refused to comply with the repression program. For example, in 1942 the SPD inspected two areas in Columbus, Georgia and Phenix City, Alabama. The report produced from this inspection "featured many of the problems that characterized the SPD investigations: allegations unsupported by statistics, the marking of certain female bodies as excessively sexual, and an emphasis on resistance to repression on the part of police, military

and local police” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 33). Local and military officers in these cities did not necessarily understand or agree with the SPD’s repression strategies.

In May of the same year, authorities enforced the May Act for the first time in 27 counties. Authorities arrested 100 women, and although these women were sentenced to time periods ranging from three to 12 months, they did not fit the flashily dressed, reckless stereotype that the SPD had painted of the notorious victory girls. Of the women arrested, 94 “came from submarginal industrial and agricultural areas and would otherwise have remained in poverty and obscurity” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 38). The remaining six women had traveled to the area to follow husbands or boyfriends and (allegedly) turned to prostitution when they ran out of funds. Although the key purpose of enforcing the May Act was to eradicate venereal disease, only four of the 100 women tested positive for any venereal diseases and there was little evidence of any involvement in prostitution. “Their bodies, white and nonwhite, were, however, marked as low class and of subnormal intelligence and therefore, in a psychiatric diagnosis, as liable to sexual excess. In other words, even potential promiscuity was grounds for incarceration” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 38). Statistics such as these supported the notion that it was not only illegal prostitution that the authorities were attempting to monitor and control; it was any promiscuous behavior, real or perceived.

The May Act was only one portion of the military and ASHA’s assault on women’s sexual freedom; it did not allow for suppression of women’s sexuality outside of commercialized prostitution. Thus, authorities shifted discourse on the venereal disease problem to include promiscuous girls, identifying them “as the greatest threat to the health of male soldiers” (Winchell, 2008, p. 110). The girls and women involved in promiscuous sexuality shifted authorities’ viewpoints of what constituted immoral sexual behavior. As previously mentioned,

many of the women who were participating in sexual acts with servicemen, and potentially infecting them with venereal diseases, were not prostitutes whose sexual encounters were based on commercial gain; they were young women seeking adventure and casual sex. These women were not the ones who had violated legal code. This allowed ASHA and the federal government to bring promiscuous girls under the rubric of prostitution. In 1942, ASHA formulated a definition of promiscuity to differentiate these young women from those defined under the term prostitution. A promiscuous girl may receive meals, gifts, or even money from a man, but that was not her primary reason for engaging in sexual activity with him. This subtle definition forced authorities, and those seeking sexual control of women, to rethink women's participation in sexual culture during World War II (Hegarty, 2008; Littauer, 2015; Winchell, 2008).

Furthermore, wartime intensified fears of government defined contagious bodies, which specifically included females and nonwhites. Preconceived notions of these groups based on discourses of gender, class, ethnicity, and race established their bodies as dangerous and threatening to social attitudes and mores. Diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea were not only sexually transmitted diseases; they were "also signs of danger and disorder in the social body" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 62). Both black and white women and black men "became the primary signifiers of diseases, allowing a perception of white men, especially servicemen, as innocent victims of these diseases and by extension the most moral members of society" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 62). The political, economical, and social ideologies of the time dubbed certain bodies as marked and left others unmarked. More specifically, these stereotypes labeled African Americans as a "syphilis soaked race" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 35) and female prostitutes as "cesspools of infection" (Hegarty, 2008, p. 65), which meant that these individuals were primarily blamed for the venereal disease problem.

During World War II, discourses on the topics of race and masculinity often overlapped. Literature, film, and advertisements were used to represent different races in forms to illustrate how Americans should perceive each race. There was particular resistance to and discrimination against the Japanese, as they were considered the enemy. The racist logic behind the stereotype, which labeled the Japanese as insects or vermin, had complicated implications since it was difficult for many Americans to discern between Japanese and Chinese Americans. Wartime propaganda attempted to portray “the Japanese as apes and other jungle creatures” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 129) to foster the metaphor of the hunt. Since the Chinese were an American ally, films and posters depicted Chinese soldiers and their families in ways to “masculinize and ennoble Chinese Americans” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 134). Race played a significant role in many aspects of American culture, and trying to differentiate between “good” and “bad” immigrants grew increasingly complex.

Definitions of whiteness were complicated during the war as well. As necessity grew for able-bodied men to fight overseas, it was not possible for Americans to continue to exclude certain ethnic groups. Similar to other discourses and public messages during World War II, advertisements, movies, and novels depicted much more cultural diversity, collapsing boundaries of white masculinity, especially in regard to African American’s participation in the military. African Americans were considered inferior to whites, especially in regards to masculinity. Thus, even though they participated in the military and in combat, “black accomplishments were not about masculinity and fighting prowess but rather about America’s success as a democracy” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 149). The Jim Crow system of laws ensured that African Americans understood their inferiority. Even during the war, blacks were continuously denied equal access to combat opportunities. Those who were allowed to enlist faced a complex “system of segregated units,

blood supplies, facilities, and buses [which] worked to lower black morale and to create racial hierarchies of white over black at every turn” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 149). Similar to the sexual discrimination against women, American minorities faced restrictions and prejudice since they did not meet the standards of white American manhood.

Women who were detained by public health authorities for venereal disease infections also faced psychological scrutiny; “classified as mentally deficient. One official defined some alleged prostitutes as constitutionally or congenitally handicapped and therefore unable to control their sexual behavior” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 72). This official also diagnosed women as mentally defective, morons, imbeciles, or even psychopaths. One Mid-western Center for Venereal Disease Treatment conducted a study of the mental ability of 500 venereal diseased women. The results, which labeled 24% of white women and 51% of black women as having defective intelligence, supported the rationale for sterilization amongst biologically inferior women. Further studies examined women’s personality characteristics, and based on the results, many women were labeled as “immature, impulsive, irresponsible, impetuous, with a tendency to blame others for any problems they may have” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 74). Equating women’s promiscuous behavior to social, intellectual, and psychological deficiencies allowed authorities to justify their focus on women and promiscuity in the repression campaign. It also validated the use of confinement as a strategy to deal with venereal diseases women. Numerous women were quarantined or even “served time in institutional homes, jails, prisons, reformatories, and mental institutions” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 77). There was little concern over the morality of such confinement since authorities believed that they were serving the greater good and protecting the country by restricting women’s ability to engage in sexual acts with servicemen, and thus spreading venereal diseases.

USO Clubs and Good Girls

As previously mentioned, the USO created clubs to provide servicemen a space to spend time with “good girls,” referred to as hostesses, who met officials’ standards of morality. The goal of the USO clubs and their hostesses was to offer military men “wholesome recreation” (Winchell, 2008, p. 109). Although organizations such as ASHA, the USO, the YMCA, and the Salvation Army wanted to confine sex to marriage, they recognized that young men had sexual needs. The USO recruited sexually respectable young women to work as hostesses and offered servicemen “the chief source of wholesome sexual companionship” (Winchell, 2008, p. 111). In selecting women to serve as hostesses, the USO utilized racial and class markers of respectability; in other words white and middle-class women were considered indicators of respectable womanhood (Hegarty, 2008; Winchell, 2008). The USO took every effort to distinguish good girl hostesses from the sexually promiscuous victory girls. “The former performed a patriotic sexual service inside USO clubs, while the latter engaged in the false patriotic act of having sex with servicemen and potentially infecting them with VD” (Winchell, 2008, p. 117). The young women chose for these positions represented the good girls; the USO chose these girls to uphold and boost morale. Rarely, authorities and officials expressed concern about manipulating female sexuality to support servicemen and military efforts (Hegarty, 2008).

The USO developed clubs to provide servicemen with a virtuous atmosphere to engage in female companionship without the risk of spreading venereal diseases. To ensure morality amongst its hostesses, the USO developed rules. For example, hostesses were discouraged from seeking dates with male soldiers and it was often the woman’s responsibility to say no to sexual advance from men. The USO assumed that women could restrict such contact and that men would listen. “This approach excused men from any accountability for pursuing hostesses

sexually when it was against club rules” (Winchell, 2008, p. 118). As with most aspects of wartime sexuality, women were held accountable for men’s sexual behavior.

Since the role of the junior hostess was a sexual one, she could also be suspected of immoral, promiscuous behavior just like any other woman. These women signified the dichotomous structure of female sexuality. On the one hand, perceived promiscuity outside the confines of the USO clubs was seen as threatening and dangerous; on the other hand, USO hostesses were contributing to the war efforts and supporting their country. Hostesses were expected to use their bodies to provide virtuous sexual services to servicemen in public, chaperoned settings. She could use her body to entertain, but never use that body to have sexual intercourse. “Junior hostesses accomplished this through activities such as dancing, playing board games, and chatting with soldiers and sailors under senior hostess supervision” (Winchell, 2008, p. 116). To further complicate the good girl/bad girl dichotomy was the fact that hostesses often used public transportation to travel to dances and other USO events, which posed a paradox to the public; public transportation often featured posters identifying women traveling alone or in groups as most likely to be promiscuous and soliciting men (Hegarty, 2008).

The USO hostesses “traveled beyond traditional gender boundaries and became vulnerable to charges of suspicious behavior” (Hegarty, 2008, p. 54). The dominant discourse during World War II acknowledged women’s desire for sexual pleasure, but condemned women who went too far with men they were not planning on marrying. There was a fine line between socially acceptable petting and unacceptable sexual intercourse; and the USO hostess had the opportunity to stay on the positive sign of that line. Women could retain a level of respectability if they volunteered as hostesses at USO establishments.

CHAPTER 3

From Private to Public: Twentieth Century Courtship

In order to understand the changes in American youth culture throughout World War II and the years following, I will outline the transformation of standards for heterosexual courtship during the first half of the twentieth century. Over the first half of the twentieth century, American youth continuously adapted to changing social norms, which included significant changes in the relationships. The dominant forms of heterosexual relationships amongst middle-class Americans continuously changed; the call replaced traditional courting, dating replaced calling, and ultimately, steady relationships replaced dating. Each of these customs brought new sexual expectations for boys and girls, and strengthened an already-existing double standard within American society.

Dating and Calling

At the beginning of the twentieth century, America's youth still adhered to a set of heterosocial standards for courtship known as calling. Courting, as Beth Bailey (1988) notes, often indicates an intention of marriage, however, in this context courtship encompasses "a wide variety of conditions, intentions, and actions" (p. 6), which might or might not lead to marriage. In addition, when discussing courting in this context, the term is always referring to heterosexual relationships between a man and woman, and often relates specifically to middle-class youth experiences. Calling occurred when a young man received an invitation from a young woman to visit her home and spend time with her, and often times her family, in the parlor (Bogle, 2008). The call consisted of a set of complicated rules, including the appropriate amount of time between invitation and visit, the types of refreshments to be served, topics of conversation, and how the call should end (Bailey, 1988). This system provided women a large portion of control

over courting relationships, as it was considered a “girl’s privilege” (Bailey, 1988, p. 20) to request a call from a young man. During the first several decades of the twentieth century, however, the calling system began to lose traction, as “courtship became more and more a private act conducted in public spheres” (Bailey, 1988, p. 3). A new form of courting, known as dating, had been established, and with it came a new set of societal standards for young men and women.

Dating had been established in urban, working-class youth in the first two decades of the twentieth century. By 1920, however, middle-class youth adopted the practice (Spurlock, 2016). The primary difference between the date and the call was where the event took place. The call always took place in the girl’s home and almost always with some level of supervision from her parents. The central aspect of the date was that it took place in the public sphere, at such places as restaurants, theaters, or dance halls (Bailey, 1988). Along with the shift in courting systems from calling to dating came a reverse in the roles for men and women. If a young woman wanted to date, she could no longer extend an invitation to her home or ask the young man to take her on a date. The control in the dating culture moved from the woman’s sphere, the private sphere, into the man’s sphere, the public sphere. “Dating also moved courtship into the economy” (Bailey, 1988, p. 21), which required money- men’s money. Money became a fundamental part of the dating system, which led to increased competition in the American courtship system.

The centrality of money in the dating system signified a system of exchange, with the woman contributing her company and the man contributing his company as well as his money. In economic terms, the woman was selling her company to the man (Bailey, 1988). Since the man was responsible for expenses, he decided when the dates would occur and with whom he wanted to spend his time. The culture of dating supported the economic system of scarcity and

abundance, and thus created a culture of competition amongst America's youth for the greatest resources, or the most popular date. By the second decade of the twentieth century, dating became the universal custom in the United States. "In other words, by the 1920s dating was the dominant script for how young people would become sexually intimate and form relationships" (Bogle, 2008, p. 14). Although not originally established on campus, students on college campuses across the country perpetuated this emerging structure of youth relationships. By examining the dating culture through a sociological lens at Penn State, Willard Waller (1937) named this system "the rating and dating complex" (Bailey, 1988).

Under this complex, Waller theorized, college students used a system of rating and dating to place each other in a systematical hierarchy of eligibility based on traits they deemed desirable. Students, both men and women, who met certain criteria, were considered to be at the top of the social hierarchy: "they may be placed in a hypothetical Class A" (Waller, 1937, p. 730). For men to rate high they had to belong to one of the top fraternities on campus, be well-dressed, know how to dance, maintain a proper appearance, use good pick-up lines, have access to a car, and possess enough money to spend on dates. Women's guidelines were similar in regards to appearance, but it was also important that she be considered a sought-after date (Bogle, 2008; Waller, 1937). To earn this reputation, a woman had to be seen in the right places, with the right man. Moreover, she needed to maintain an appearance of being in great demand, which meant turning down dates, sometimes weeks in advance, so that she did not seem too readily available.

College students monitored each other under this system, which turned dates into commodities and exploited young men and women. Since the number of dates signified a person's value, "American young people sought their 'personal welfare' through dates" (Bailey,

1988, p. 58). The level of consumption she could demand determined a woman's value, whereas the man's value rested in the level of consumption he provided. Women were also expected to be physically attractive. Men were often advised to evaluate a woman based on the size of her breasts; a big bosom meant expensive. Some sources compared the evaluation of women to that of a show horse. A woman's worth lie in the public impression she made, a possession that made the man look good (Bailey, 1988). This exploitation of men's possessions and women's appearance and reputation perpetuated a culture of inequality and a double standard that persists today.

The shift from the private domain of calling to the public sphere of dating also brought changes in sexual behaviors amongst youth. Since dating took place outside of the home, it offered new opportunities for young people to explore their sexuality. Public discourse focused on youth and their premarital sexual experiences, which both condemned and celebrated new sexual conventions (Bailey, 1988; Spurlock, 2016). Youth's attitudes about sex and sexual practices directly opposed "conventional morality and values of (older) authority – and youth meant them to" (Bailey, 1988, p. 79). Newfound freedom transformed into new sexual norms and increased acknowledgement that sex could be for pleasure. At the end of World War I, two sexual conventions emerged – necking and petting. Although there are not official definitions of the terms, necking generally refers to caresses or stimulation from the neck up, including the neck, lips, and ears. Petting could include any other form of sexual stimulation anywhere on the body, but does not include intercourse. These new sexual norms took place in the public arena and mass media, such as television and magazines, and brought the increasingly promiscuous youth culture into the public eye. Faced with the outright rejection of traditional sexual mores, parents and authorities were increasingly concerned about the sexual behaviors of young men

and women and attempted to regain control (Bailey, 1988; Bogle, 2008; Spurlock, 2016).

Parents, high schools, and colleges and universities all strived to control youth's sex through education, rules, and policies.

Going Steady

Throughout World War II and the years following, a new youth culture began to emerge. By the 1940s, the term *teenager* replaced *youth* and *adolescent* in popular American discourse about young men and women (Spurlock, 2016). Teenagers seemed to take over American life, as they became a major influence over the entertainment industry, appearing as the stars in major films and novels throughout the 1950s. The portrayals of young men and women in popular culture pointed to the shift in American perceptions of sex and relationships: “the late 1950s were the first time in which high-school-aged teens became the central protagonists of dramas that highlighted contemporary teen concerns” (Nash, 2006, p. 178). Consumerism during the postwar years melded with continued fears of teenage sexuality, and thus, many advertisements and advice literature promoted the image of idealized family and marriage and emphasized the importance for young girls to secure a husband (Nash, 2006; Schrum, 2004). One way to achieve this was through steady relationships.

Steady relationships were more prevalent during the postwar years and by the 1950s, going steady was the pervasive form of heterosocial relationships in middle schools and high schools. These relationships brought new opportunities and meanings for sexual intimacy, and teenagers, especially females, had to navigate the complex and often ambiguous social rules set forth. Going steady offered teens a level of commitment that allowed for more sexual freedom and young men and women could more easily explore the erotic (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Spurlock 2016). Going steady standards as discussed below generally only applied to

heterosexual, middle-class relationships. There were different standards amongst gender, racial, and class groups. Their peers often ostracized those who did not conform or did not fit into the social standards.

Going steady defined by Robert Hermann as “a relationship between dating partners which survives through time long enough to permit and encourage group awareness and sanction” (Spurlock, 2016, p. 70). Many heterosexual teen couples that were engaging in sexual acts, including heavy petting and intercourse, were going steady and experimenting. These relationships allowed for young boys and girls to engage in sexual acts, basically hidden in plain sight. The level of commitment of these steady relationships “provided the context, setting, and rationale for widespread sexual experimentation among heterosexual teens and young adults in the 1950s” (Littauer, 2015, p. 118), which led to increased sexual intimacy for young people that were in these relationships.

Engaging in intercourse while in committed, steady relationships allowed young girls the opportunity to explore the sexual minefield of contradictory beliefs. This “created a cultural middle ground between explicit sexual mores and tolerated sexual practices that would influence Americans’ beliefs about sexual acceptability for decades” (Littauer, 2015, p. 113). Teenage girls and young women had the opportunity to experiment sexually due to the belief that their actions were justified because of the loving nature of their relationships. Going steady did, however, continue to uphold sexist standards that were typical of dating in the earlier part of the twentieth century (Littauer, 2015; Spurlock, 2016). “As far back as the nineteenth century, women’s rights advocates, radical marriage reformers, health crusaders, and evangelicals had called for a sexual morality that applied equally to men and women,” however, “the double standard remained the

assumption of most Americans” (Spurlock, 2016, p. 91). Due to this double standard, young girls faced contradictory social and cultural ideological standards.

Although going steady afforded opportunities for increased sexual intimacy, young women and teenage girls continued to live with the cultural expectation that sex only occurred within the confines of marriage. There was little acknowledgement from older adults, the media, or society that women had interest in and the desire for sex. Girls were expected to act as if they wanted sex, but not act upon their urges (Littauer, 2015). In contrast, to be popular, girls were expected to participate in a certain level of sexual experimentation, at the very least petting, but they could not go too far or risk a bad reputation. The double standard that developed during the early part of the twentieth century persisted through the 1950s. It was very clear to almost every young girl that a double standard existed, yet where the line was drawn between just enough and too much was very ambiguous. If a girl’s sex life became a topic of gossip, she would be ostracized from the groups who were concerned over reputation, and to a vast majority of American, reputation was everything (Bailey, 1988; Bailey, 1999; Spurlock, 2016).

The sexual “double standard worked mainly to the benefit of boys,” yet “enforcement came from the girls” (Spurlock, 2016, p. 93). Boys were free to express themselves sexually, while girls were expected to adhere to the confusing set of ideological standards. Since girls were expected to set the limits, if a couple went too far, it was the female’s fault. Boys, however, pushed the limits and often crossed the line from subtle pressure to outright aggression (Bailey, 1999; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988). Young men were even taught by their peers and professionals various techniques to coerce women who expressed sexual reticence. Sexual coercion and aggression were seldom categorized as assault or rape during this time period. It was seldom that women reported sexual assault. This could be attributed, perhaps, to the fact that

those women who did report sexual assault were forced to prove their own sexual innocence. Since it was the girl's responsibility to set boundaries, women should consider how her own unconscious mixed signals led men to behave in a way that today would be considered assault. Littauer (2015) discusses one magazine article that stated "as many as a quarter of reported rapes were committed by teen boys, but cited the views of 'doctors' that 'these 'rapes' were often nothing more than sex exploration and curiosity'" (p. 128). This type of cultural ideology further complicated the sexual landscape for women in the first half of the twentieth century.

Dating and sexual standards differed across race and class lines, and the opinions and involvement of parents and adults in teens' lives contributed to the complexity of expectations for young men and women. Middle- and upper-class girls were expected to adhere to aforementioned standards of sexuality; girls and women from a lower class status, however, often participated in more promiscuous sexual behavior. Young boys and men would engage in sexual relationships with lower-class girls and women and, because the double standard did not apply to them, were not risking developing a bad reputation. Also, since these girls and women were not considered marriage material, it did not matter how far they went with them, dubbing them nothing other than "pick-ups" (Spurlock, 2016). These women "were sexual objects with whom one pushed 'as far as you can'" (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 263).

Teens in the postwar years saw increased pressure to marry, however they were not allowed to do so without the permission of their parents until the age of 18. Steady relationships mirrored marriage in many ways, including some form of sexual contact, even if it was short of coitus, and the desire for companionship. Marriage was still the preferred context for intercourse, however, it could be accepted more easily if it occurred within a committed, pre-existing relationship and it added meaning to the meaning of that relationship (Littauer, 2015). The going

steady couple could enjoy the benefits of social recognition without the commitment of marriage. The goal was not childbearing, rather companionship (Spurlock, 2016). There are conflicting beliefs regarding parents' and adult authorities' opinions of steady relationships and increased sexual experimentation.

There is evidence that there was some resistance to committed, steady relationships from parents and other adult authorities; however, the reasons for opposition were different. John C. Spurlock (2016) cites various historians, health pamphlets, and films during the first half of the twentieth century that discussed a resistance to steady dating. It appears that there was some belief that steady relationships limited youths' opportunities to become acquainted with others and, therefore, restricted their mate selection. Others were opposed to steady relationships because they believed that more casual dating allowed for certain levels of sexual intimacy, yet did not allow a young couple enough time for coitus. Going steady, however, allowed a couple plenty of time negotiate and perform coitus. Parents feared that adolescents going steady would lead to more sexually serious relationships, and if it resulted in pregnancy, would bring shame to the family. Opinions regarding the acceptability of increased intimacy varied between racial and class lines. Middle- and upper-class parents were often less accepting of the dating and steady relationships than working-class and African American parents (Littauer, 2015; Spurlock, 2016).

One study provided insight into the beliefs of predominantly white, affluent parents in Long Island. These parents, especially the mothers, were less accepting of the young age that youth were beginning to date, although they felt pressure to conform to other parents' standards, allowing their children to date as young as 11. There was, as there generally is, a double standard regarding the appropriateness of dating, as the responsibility often fell on the girls. One parent in the Long Island study was even quoted saying, "It's the girls' fault, this early dating. They grow

up too fast. Drive and live faster” (Littauer, 2015, p. 130). In contrast, a study conducted by ASHA revealed that many African American mothers “knew about and accepted their daughters’ sexual activity,” (Littauer, 2015, p. 132) and even discussed puberty, sex and contraception with them. White parents, however, were less “willing to openly acknowledge sex in order to educate girls about birth control” (Littauer, 2015, p. 134). Whether or not they approved of steady relationships or premarital sex, many parents did accept the changes in the relationships of American youth were part of a larger shift in postwar American culture and that “Americans were entering a more liberal sex age” (Littauer, 2015, p. 133). Although it was prior to the time period commonly referred to as the sexual revolution, young men and women were sexually experimenting and pushing the boundaries of traditional sexual mores, and many parents acknowledged that American youth culture was changing.

Contradictions in parents’ and adult authorities’ opinions could conceivably be a result of the changing social and sexual standards during the postwar years. In the years following the war, many previously held social standards were being brought into question. For example, in at least 35 states, premarital sex was illegal. This was true even for adults. During the postwar period, however, authorities began to question whether it was necessary or appropriate to continue to control girls’ sexual behavior through law enforcement. Between 1945 and 1965, the rate of sex offenses against young girls declined. This could, however, be attributed to a number of factors, including the fact that police began punishing sexually active girls with charges that were not sexual offenses. For example, teen girls were often charged with “‘ungovernability,’ ‘loitering,’ ‘immoral or indecent conduct,’ or running away” (Littauer, 2015, p. 137).

Over time, premarital sex became somewhat more socially acceptable. Adults and youth alike begin to accept the existence “of premarital sex within the bounds of steady relationships.

Alongside the dominant cultural prescription of premarital sex for girls existed a willingness on the part of certain adults to evaluate young women's sexual behavior more contextually" (Littauer, 2015, p. 133). Premarital sexual intercourse could be tolerated, or at least ignored, by adults if it remained private. Once it became public (due to pregnancy), it was punishable. This led to the necessity of openly accessible birth control, which will be discussed in greater detail later. All of these changes in adolescent sexuality and behavior also led to many changes in the education system's approach to sex education.

CHAPTER 4

Sex and Education

Throughout the twentieth century, “adolescent sexuality would rarely seem to stand alone; instead, the men and women who studied the subject would consistently tie adolescence to its role as a cause of, or solution to, broader social crises” (Moran, 2000, p. 24). The focus of the social crises changed over the course of the twentieth century and included venereal disease, promiscuity, the family, the home, and education. Each crisis, however, was inextricably linked to sex and the need for authoritative control.

Sex in the Classroom

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and into the 1960s, social and political authorities argued that each supposed social crisis had direct ties to public health and social concerns and, at times, patriotic duty, thus, justifying their actions. Sex education courses either took a negative approach, one that emphasized fear and the consequences of illicit sex, or a positive approach, which addressed human relations and the potential of sex within marriage. Regardless of the approach, sex education at the secondary and postsecondary levels provided prime opportunity to influence adolescent and young adult mindsets and (hopefully) control their behavior (Freeman, 2008; Zimmerman, 2015).

Dr. Prince A. Morrow, a physician and a professor at New York University, crusaded against venereal disease and sexual immorality and believed that social issues were directly linked with sexual behavior. He proclaimed that alleviating problems of social dysfunction should not rest solely on traditional authorities such as the family, the church, and the community; rather, it was the responsibility of professionally trained experts, including public health physicians, psychologists, and professional educators. Morrow called for social reform to

combat disease and sexual immorality, which would be primarily achieved through education. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, a growing number of activists, whom sided with Morrow, concluded “that explosive adolescent sexuality and society’s sexual crisis actually shared the same solution: sex education by professional experts” (Moran, 2000, p. 24). Morrow created the American Federation for Sex Hygiene, and shortly after his death in 1913, the organization merged with the American Vigilance Association, which became the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA). As previously discussed, ASHA played a central role in efforts to eradicate venereal disease and prostitution during World War II. The association also contributed substantially to the development and transformation of sex education (Freeman, 2008; Moran, 2000; Zimmerman, 2015).

Early sex education focused almost entirely on eradicating venereal disease, and equated social hygiene to venereal disease. Americans believed that by providing sex education across the globe they were protecting the world from totalitarian dictatorship and “defending the modern family from a host of internal and external threats” (Freeman, 2015, p. 50). This aligned with wartime beliefs that the family was one of the most powerful weapons against enemy threats.

Any education beyond venereal disease information for women, only included basic information about menstruation, interspersed with “instruction in fear – that is, in the danger of arousing male lust, the stigma of sexual immorality, and the prevalence of venereal diseases among their future husbands” (Moran, 2000, p. 60). For many years, it ignored human emotion and sexual pleasure altogether, and focused on attempting to uphold strict moral standards; however, with increased divorce rates and growing concern of the threat to the traditional family, sex education courses began to include information sex in relation to fulfillment within marriage,

yet continued to prohibit premarital and extramarital intercourse (Freeman, 2008; Moran, 2000). “Locating the deepest human satisfactions in marriage allowed sex educators to accept the new philosophy of pleasure seeking without sacrificing their central assertion that extramarital and premarital sex were forbidden” (Moran, 2000, p. 93). By representing sex as forbidden outside the confines of marriage and by indicating that marriages would not be successful if one engaged sexually prior to the nuptials, social and educational authorities were attempting to control adolescents’ sexual behavior.

During World War II, sex educators and social hygienists continued to be preoccupied by concerns of promiscuity and venereal diseases. Many believed, however, that the disorderly state of the youth, which might have been attributed to absence of a male role model and mothers working outside the home, necessitated increased focus on the problems of the family (Freeman, 2008). The topic of family, however, was not of particular interest to those associated with the social hygiene movement, since “syphilis and gonorrhea represented a more tangible danger than did poor child rearing” (Moran, 2000, p. 122). For decades, social hygienists and reformers linked venereal disease to the social breakdown of society, sexual emancipation, and a revolt among youth. Since “the social hygiene movement’s early vigor had depended equally on its medical and moral missions” (Moran, 2000, p. 124), it was key to maintain the connection between the two. With the development of penicillin during World War II, however, this metaphor was threatened since contraction of a venereal disease no longer posed a physical health threat. This essentially forced ASHA to refocus their position within sex education, which included increased concentration of conservation of the American family. Although the disease itself may no longer pose a physical health threat, members of ASHA argued that the prevalence of these diseases indicated deeper trouble in American families (Moran, 2000).

In order to explain their new stance, ASHA members changed the “definition of ‘public health’ beyond the boundaries of physical health to include mental social well-being” (Moran, 2000, p. 125). Sex education would include topics that could not simply be cured by a dose of penicillin. Curriculum could move beyond the scope of prior public health concerns to include home economics, marriage counseling, and psychology. Under this concept, family became professionalized and standardized, treated in the same manner as other professions by providing families with expert guidance and education.

Throughout World War II, as previously mentioned, prostitutes and promiscuous women were put in jail in an attempt to control the spread of venereal disease, and by extension, immorality and sexual license. By the end of the war, it became evident that simply jailing women deemed immoral or promiscuous would not solve the problem of the family breakdown. “To get to the roots of family dysfunction, ASHA leaders decided to emphasize the association’s educational mission” (Moran, 2000, p. 126), which required developing a new model of sex education, and there were two distinct models of sex education to follow – collegiate marriage courses and the Toms River experiment.

During the 1920s and 1930s, as perceptions of marriage and courtship began changing, many colleges and universities started to offer elective marriage courses. Young people expected more fulfillment and intimacy from their marriages, and perhaps sought out these courses in hopes of having their expectations realized. In addition to these shifting perceptions, many educators worried about changing sex roles. Female enrollment in institutions of higher education was growing tremendously “and many of these students seemed bent on finding careers for themselves” (Moran, 2000, p. 127). Many feared that educated women would abandon their marital and reproductive duties; thus, leading marriage educators to make “a

housewife's role seem more 'scientific' and worthy of study" (Moran, 2000, p. 127), in hopes that women who attended college would choose to marry quickly upon graduation. By 1939, there were at least 240 marriage and family courses offered through institutions of higher education across the country. By the 1940s and 50s, "the marriage courses on college campuses put less emphasis on psychology and sexuality and more on personal problems and emotions" (Peril, 2006, p. 281).

One of the most influential marriage courses was Elizabeth S. Force's Family Relationships course at Tom Rivers High School in Toms River, New Jersey. The Family Relationships course incorporated a variety of topics including courtship, petting, necking, mate selection, engagement, "getting along" with family members, marriage, child rearing, money management, and the many demands modern society place on marriage. This approach focused primarily on encouraging adolescents to examine gender roles and sexual norms. Although it was considered sex education, the Toms River's curriculum did not include in-depth information on sexual behavior or reproduction. Force and Toms River school authorities did respond to students' questions regarding sex on an as needed basis, but it was not a main topic of the discussion in the classroom (Freeman, 2008; Moran, 2000).

Combining collegiate marriage education courses and the Toms River course, in 1947, ASHA's leaders "proclaimed that their organization's central mission would be 'education for personal and family living'" (Moran, 2000, p. 130). In the first several years following World War II, however, sex educator's programs continued to focus primarily on the problems of sexuality and sex delinquency. The 1947 ASHA subcommittee report proclaimed, "Education for personal and family living is based on the thesis that the sex factor in human living, as it affects personal development and especially in its relation to marriage, parenthood, the home and the

family, merits a dignified place among other topics of deep interest” (Moran, 2000, p. 130). In other words, the goal of sex education continued to be sexual restraint.

With the growing visibility of the baby boom family and continual readjustment after the war, many educators, family sociologists, psychologists, and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers supported a transformation of sex education into family life education, or FLE (Moran, 2000; Zimmerman, 2015). This form of education essentially prepared students for home life and enabled individuals to live more constructive lives. Even though the general consensus amongst officials in ASHA was to utilize an FLE, or life-adjustment education, approach to sex education, in thousands of schools across the country educators continued to include graphic information about venereal diseases. When more specific discussions occurred regarding family life education, there was a great deal of confusion about what to include in this emerging curriculum. There were a variety of interpretations of FLE amongst supporters from organizations including ASHA and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Some believed that the courses should include factual information about sex, while others wanted to avoid the topic altogether to maintain wholesome attitudes. One message remained consistent in the in family life education – “that excessive premarital intimacies were virtually guaranteed to harm their relationships in the future” (Moran, 2000, p. 141). Education authorities used this tactic as a means to control teenagers’ sexual behavior. If they were told that engaging in premarital sexual acts, perhaps they would abstain in order to protect their future marriages.

The postwar years also saw a shift in understanding sex roles for males and females. “Traditionally, Americans had believed that masculine and feminine traits were biologically based and fundamentally different” (Moran, 2000, p. 144). Psychologists and social scientists argued that these characteristics were learned and developed over time, and to achieve the proper

male or female role, children needed a supportive environment and must put forth individual effort (Freeman, 2008). Many began to blame youth misbehavior and delinquency on unsettled families and some parents' failure to conform to proper gender roles. Many observers believed that children from homes that lacked appropriate gender role models were "much more likely to experiment with disapproved behaviors, such as drag racing and promiscuity" (Moran, 2000, pp. 144-145). FLE reinforced traditional gender roles, and beginning at young age little boys learned how to be gentlemen and girls learned how to be little ladies. As part of this curriculum, educators taught that boys were to be the sexual aggressors and girls the sexual limit setters.

Many women in the 1950s who recognized the injustice of this double standard, such as Sylvia Plath, nevertheless heeded the enormous social pressure to remain 'nice girls' and remained content only to 'lean enviously against the boundary and hate, hate, hate, the boys who dispel sexual hunger freely.' Like other young women, Plath knew that the school authorities would blame her, and not the young man, for sexual improprieties. (Moran, 2000, p. 145)

Similar to other systems of control, sex education perpetuated the sexual double standard and forced girls to navigate a difficult dichotomy. Girls were expected to express sexual interest in boys, and were rewarded for doing so, but were not supposed to be sexually permissive (Freeman, 2008).

Although FLE gained a lot of support from organizations and schools, little was actually known about whether or not the courses were effective in creating well-adjusted adults. After conducting a survey of former students, Force optimistically credited low divorce rates to successful completion of the FLE course (Freeman, 2008). It was difficult to discern if students' success or lack thereof was attributed to FLE or some other factor.

The best studies of FLE's effects demonstrated at most that students who had taken courses in family living did, indeed, know more about the course material at the end of the semester than did students who had not take the class, but by the family life educators' own admission, this accumulation of knowledge meant little without evidence that it would lead to well-adjusted behavior in student's adult life. (Moran, 2000, p. 148)

There were a variety of reasons for the lack of discussion on the topic of sex in FLE courses. For one, in some areas, it was illegal to discuss sex in schools. It was also difficult to regulate sex education as part of FLE since it was "a grab bag of concepts from tangentially related disciplines with no unifying orthodoxy" (Moran, 2000, p. 149). Many leaders in FLE, including ASHA, intentionally deemphasized sex in order to detach from their social hygiene past.

During the same time period as the Toms River experiment, San Diego public schools were also developing new curriculum for sex education. Part of the justification for the new sex education program was the city's demographic transition. During and after World War II, the Mexican American and African American population expanded in San Diego, and with that expansion came the need to remedy social and structural problems that emerged from these populations. There was concern from educational authorities that the young people, particularly girls, from these minority families would misbehave, become sexual delinquents, and possibly become pregnant, and that this misbehavior would stem from a lack of knowledge. Education could provide young girls "with information to help minimize teenage pregnancy; nothing was said about changing men's and boy's behavior" (Freeman, 2008, p. 59). The sex education curriculum developed to assist with the goal of changing female behavior incorporated sex and family life education, and San Diego educators termed the program "human relations education" (Freeman, 2008).

The lessons incorporated into the program, which began as early as puberty, focused on a variety of biological facts, personal and social growth and adjustment, social hygiene, and reproduction. Human relations education did not have an overbearing emphasis on the family. Girls' education included information on regarding menstruation and physical hygiene, and overtime incorporated discussion of "various organs of male and female anatomy" (Freeman, 2008, p. 63). When they reached discussions of mating, however, teachers took a more metaphorical approach to sex. The textbook included illustrations of animals and pictures that supposedly illustrate human interest in love, and the information about sexual reproduction utilized plants and animals to explain the process. Although this approach was more liberal than Toms River's Family Life Education, San Diego's sex education program still reinforced the dichotomy of gender, and educators seemed "to have been particularly invested in preserving girls' reputations – imposing ethnocentric, middle-class ideals on those from poorer communities of color" (Freeman, 2008, p. 68). This approach reinforces the notion that education was used throughout the mid-twentieth century to shape and control behavior, particularly female sexual behavior.

Collegiate Control and Early Rebellion

Colleges and universities did not rely solely on education inside the classroom to control women's sexual behavior; they also imparted rules and policies upon female students. Early institutions of higher education throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries imparted very specific rules for girls who wanted boy visitors. For example, special parlors were often present in dormitories so that visits could be properly chaperoned. Acting *in loco parentis* institutions of higher education relied on a system called parietals to specifically control female students. Parietals often put a hindrance, or at least a damper, on dating since at many

universities the women had to return to campus earlier than the men, and many men had no curfew at all (Peril, 2006). Women faced additional restrictions including visitation hours, “security patrols, and restrictions on students’ use of cars” (Bailey, 1994). Although restricting dating to on-campus parlors did not last, parietals and *in loco parentis* persisted through a large portion of the twentieth century.

This set of rules set forth requirements for “when and under what circumstances women students could leave their residence halls in the evening and on weekends” (Bailey, 1999, 78). Fear of women’s freedom and ability to do as they pleased struck within parents and college administrators. “If, as advice writers were wont to point out, a freshman walking across campus for the first time had the opportunity to remake herself, *in loco parentis* and other rules were there to make sure she didn’t stray too far from accepted standards of femininity” (Peril, 2006, p. 143). When they were permitted to leave, women had to sign out and indicate with whom they were leaving. The parietals were not imposed on male students, further intensifying the sexual double standard. Similar to World War II culture, the belief was that by controlling women’s behaviors and actions, men would have no partners. Fear for women’s safety necessitated the control of the comings and goings (Bailey, 1994, 1999; Peril, 2006). “Ostensibly these procedures ensured safety of women students – but they also helped colleges control illicit S-E-X- on campus” (Peril, 2006, p. 149). These rules may have limited the times and places that sexual activity could take place, but it did not eliminate students’ sexual contact. Students found ways to evade control, “climbing into dormitory rooms through open windows, signing out to the library and going to motels, spending hours making out in parked cars but signing in to the dormitory on time” (Bailey, 1999, 79).

In addition to the structural system of control imparted on female college students, there was also an ideological system of controls. This system was even more pervasive than the structural system, and it centered on the idea that “men and women were fundamentally different creatures” (Bailey, 1994, p. 242). As difference was the key component to enforce control, men and women had different expectations in life and in sex. “Women were the limit setters and men the aggressors” (Bailey, 1994, p. 242). Heterosexual, middle class men and women were entrenched in a culture of respectability that set clear rules about sexual behavior. While there was some leniency depending on the relationship, one rule was tried and true: no sex before marriage. Various form of authority enforced and prohibited certain sexual, including parents, peers, popular culture, and the legal system. “Thus young people had to negotiate the difference between the public rules and controls and a set of equally complex behaviors that were more or less acceptable so long as they remained private or covert” (Bailey, 1999, p. 76). The growth on institutions of higher education provided young adults a new landscape to explore their sexuality, which they did at increasing rates throughout the middle of the twentieth century.

Male college students had paved a less-than-reassuring path of rebellion and debauchery. As young women’s presence on campus grew, so did concerns about the potential for similar bad behavior, which had the potential to be even more harmful since boys’ broken bones could heal, but a girl’s bad reputation could not. Since girls were away from the watchful eyes of their parents, they “needed protection from improper society and connections of love” (Peril, 2006, p. 145). It became the responsibility of the institution to provide such guidance and protection. As a standard, *in loco parentis*, which means “in the place of the parent” in Latin (Peril, 2006, p. 145), allowed colleges and universities to restrict and discipline students, especially female students. Women’s dormitories often exemplified the comforts of home, and as such, required a motherly

figured. These women in command held various titles including “dormitory matrons, sorority housemothers, deans of women, and, at some schools, female presidents” (Peril, 2006, p. 148).

In the years leading up to the sexual revolution, college girls across the country began to challenge and defy the overly strict rules that governed not only their behavior, but attempted to control their morals. For example, in 1962 at Vassar College, female students demanded an explanation for what constituted the “highest standards” that every girl should uphold. “President Sarah Gibson Blanding...called a compulsory convocation in response, and told students that premarital sex or excessive drinking were grounds for expulsion” (Peril, 2006, p. 171).

College students were also inadvertently challenging collegiate authority through panty raids. In the spring of 1952, panty raids were occurring all college campuses across the country.

At the University of Wisconsin, 5,000 students charged women’s dorms, urged on by bugle calls. At the University of Alabama, women’s lingerie was locked in trunks to prevent a raid, and the girls were reduced to throwing socks to the boys massed below their windows. (Bailey, 1999, p. 45)

The panty raids of the 1950s connected a “challenge to authority to the potentially explosive power of sexuality” (Bailey, 1999, 46). Sexual misconduct amongst college students had been a popular topic in media and journalism since the 1920s. The panty raids, however, “with their volatile mix of youth, sex, and failed authority” (Bailey, 1999, p. 46), highlighted increasing anxieties in post-war America. Even though many college and university officials viewed the panty raids as a manageable disruption from an otherwise controllable student body, they were worried that the panty raids may be the tip of a very problematic iceberg.

CHAPTER 5

Postwar Culture

As Mary Louise Adams states in *The Trouble with Normal*,

In the years after the Second World War, ‘normality’ was a primary marker of difference between groups of people. As defined by increasingly popular psychological and psychoanalytic theories, normality was the desired result of an individual’s emotional and psychic evolution, a product of social and environmental factors. (1997, p. 81)

As men were returning home from overseas or military bases, Americans tried to return to some level of normalcy. Women, who had begun taking over previously male-dominated positions, were expected to return to their previous posts in the home. To their dismay, servicemen returned to their girlfriends, fiancés, and wives to find the previously “pleasantly pliable and even appealingly incompetent” (Israel, 2002, p. 171) women they had left behind, transformed into strong-willed women, with little recognition of the limitations of her endurance. The previous “normal” no longer existed; and Americans would spend the next several decades attempting to reconstruct a nation to its former order.

Women continued to push the boundaries of previously held social and sexual mores. The release of literature such as the Kinsey Reports (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953) and *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) provided women new discourses to discuss their dissatisfaction. The panic over venereal disease and promiscuity eventually ended; however, new panics began to emerge. Changing morality and the sexual consequences of social change were common topics of discussion the years after World War II.

These changes may not have been the overt challenges to the system that eventually transpired in the 1960s, but women were changing and gradually began pushing the sexual and social standards imposed on them.

B-Girls

In 1941, in an attempt to control the spread of venereal disease, the Federal Security Agency's Social Protection Division closed over 700 red-light districts to eliminate brothel prostitution. The closing of these establishments forced sex workers in the public, including bards, hotels, and the streets. Officials found that the repression of prostitution moved the battle against venereal diseases in the public. Men who previously met prostitutes in the brothels were forced to seek other means of sexual satisfaction. They began entering bars and taverns to meet women "who fell across the spectrum of commercial to casual sexual availability" (Littauer, 2015, p. 55). Drink solicitors were not professional prostitutes, and therefore bridged the gap between illegal and legal sex.

During the 1950s, a type of drink solicitors known as B-girls created a professional subculture in California that further skewed the women's sexual boundaries. These women "purposefully blurred the line between commercial and casual sex and took advantage of citizens' declining support for legal campaigns to control women's sexuality" (Littauer, 2015, p. 53). According to *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (1994), a B-girl is "a woman employed by a bar, nightclub, or the like, to act as a companion to male customers and to induce them to buy drinks, and usually paid a percentage of what the customers spend" (pp. 139-140). Since soliciting drinks was not technically illegal, it was difficult for authorities to control B-girls or the owners of the establishments. Social protection authorities, however, considered B-girls a threat to the health and safety of the general public and servicemen. They

encouraged local police to target B-girls through enforcement strategies designed to control other ‘disorderly’ women, such as undercover police investigation and entrapment, vague vagrancy statutes, loosely delegated public health authority, threats to the business of tavern ownership, expanded legal definitions of criminal sexual exchange, mandatory venereal disease testing, and quarantine. (Littauer, 2015, p. 56)

Initially, local authorities generally avoided targeting B-girls and their employers as long as they were not believed to be selling sex along with the drinks. Many bar owners eventually banned women from entry into their establishments in order to appease government officials and avoid fines or closure (Littauer, 2015).

Although the official job function of the B-girl was not sex, her sexual behavior was part of the fantasy the customers sought. This fantasy involved the man feeling desired and wanted by an unavailable woman. To keep a customer’s attention, B-girls would entice him, either explicitly or implicitly, with “promises of sexual services, which involved verbal communication, physical touching, and spatial movement inside the bar” (Littauer, 2015, p. 69). Employers only wanted the employees to conditionally available and B-girls would do everything possible to create the illusion, until his money ran out. Patrons of these establishments often expected some sort of sexual interaction with the women whom they bought drinks. Patrons believed that each drink bought for a woman allowed him access and entitlement to her sexualized body.

Under pressure to control the use of alcohol to profit off of servicemen, several political leaders outlawed drink solicitation. Servicemen were seen as the epitome of American middle-class and the way of American life. One politician went as far as to revoke liquor licenses from the owners of bars that employed B-girls. The laws sought to protect men from being coerced, by

females, to spend money on drinks for exorbitant prices. It was the state's legal obligation to protect men from bar owners and B-girls, who conspired to prey upon men. There was, however, little public panic over the "B-girl menace." Many felt as though government regulation of drink solicitation was unnecessary and that state resources could be better spent elsewhere. Without political pressure, drink solicitation continued, and arrest records for B-girls virtually disappeared by the early 1960s (Littauer, 2015).

Women in Literature

While B-girls created a subculture that challenged traditional sexual mores, women in mass culture were willingly returning to the home to fulfill their "natural" roles of wives and mothers. In the decades following World War II, America entered an era of domesticity, which increasingly focused on returning to traditional gender roles and establishing strong families. This mindset developed "amidst a highly ideological war against communism and an escalating arms race, defense planners refashioned the World War II notion of fighting *for* the American family into a new ideal that positioned the family at the very center of the battle" (McEnany, 2000, p. 449). According to government officials, nuclear families fought and won wars by providing the psychological support and moral authority necessary to defeat communism. The ideological nuclear family pushed women into service for national defense once again; however, this time, their duties were in the home as wives and mothers (McEnany, 2000). According to popular culture, women's natural place was in the home, and thus, where they should be the happiest. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, however, various forms of literature would challenge these beliefs, and slowly disrupt longstanding sexual and gender norms.

The Kinsey Reports

In 1948, Alfred Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, followed by *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953. Each report was based on extensive interviews with thousands of American men and women, and presented an abundance of statistics about their sexual behavior, “including information on their age at first intercourse, number of partners, history of premarital and extramarital sex, incidence of homosexuality and lesbianism, and virtually every other imaginable sexual statistic” (Reumann, 2005, p. 1). The reports stunned experts and the American public, especially since they came at time when Americans were clinging to traditional beliefs that sexual intercourse should only take place within the confines of marriage. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953) was particularly shocking since female sexuality had been a common topic of debate for quite some time.

In his report, Kinsey indicated that approximately 50% of the women interviewed stated they had participated in premarital intercourse. He also claimed that approximately 62% of married women had masturbated, and 25% of married women engaged in extramarital intercourse at one point (Bailey, 1994; Littauer, 2015; Petigny, 2004; Reumann, 2005). Although Kinsey’s reports did not include an accurate sample of the overall population (he did not include a sufficient description of African Americans and other nonwhites), it included key findings that support the notion that women were engaging in sexual behaviors at higher rates during the postwar years than many believed. Many Americans wrote letters to Kinsey, articulating their support, objections, or criticism of his work. Many of those who wrote to Kinsey were supportive of his report, indicating they could personally relate to portions of it. The letters and Kinsey’s responses allowed Americans to express concern or ask questions regarding their own sexuality, which were not publicly acceptable conversations in other areas. Frank discussions and

honest feedback offered Americans pertinent information regarding what was, and was not, considered sexual normality (Littauer, 2015; Reumann, 2005).

Prior to its release, there were conflicting opinions about how *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) would rank in relation to the male version, and whether it would spark additional controversy about American's sexuality or if it would, as many hoped, provide some reassurance that traditional morality had not been lost. Once released, it was quickly determined that those who predicted additional controversy were correct. There was a wide range of opinions about how to interpret the data presented in the text. American readers, and even experts, had a difficult time understanding how to extrapolate and understand the complicated tables and statistics. The widespread confusion was not only indicative of readers' inability to comprehend complicated statistics, "more profoundly, it spoke to a representational crisis regarding American female sexuality" (Reumann, 2005, p. 96). Americans did not want to believe that women, especially housewives, were not only interested in sex, but that they were engaging in morally corrupt sexual behavior.

Many readers and reviewers attempted to disassociate the women in Kinsey's report to actual American women, claiming that the women posited, "with their rich histories of petting, premarital intercourse, and noncoital sex techniques, simply did not and could not exist" (Reumann, 2005, p. 99). They justified these beliefs by claiming the women in the report had to be lying, as that was the sort of woman who would be willing to reveal such intimate details. Some authors indicated that the women might exist, but that they were aberrant minority.

Although there was controversy over the male version, no one questioned whether those subjects were exaggerating or fantasizing about their sexual histories. That is because "when women talked about sex, the cultural stakes were different" (Reumann, 2005, p. 102). As with

women's sexuality during World War II, there was tremendous public concern that, if the reports were accurate, women were not following the societal rules of appropriate behavior and that it could potentially have grave consequences for traditional American culture. The reports, regardless of whose opinion was accurate,

Offered a graphic version of the deep cultural dualism about women's sexuality that allow them to be displayed as two groups, one pure and maternal and the other abandoned and actively sexual. What lay at the heart of this division was a deep anxiety that these two drastically different women could not be separated, that they were in fact the same figure. (Reumann, 2005, pp. 102-103)

This unrestrained type of unrestrained sexuality threatened familial and national stability. It also led to confusion about how women would define their own sexual desires and sexual pleasure. It an attempt to refocus the image of female sexuality, mass media, including magazines, used Kinsey's report as a means to promote and raise expectations for marriage by telling women to compare themselves to the sexual descriptions in the book (Reumann, 2005).

The statistics and data provided in the reports also offered young girls a contradictory view of sexuality than their parents, and especially their mothers, provided them. It was apparent to many teens that the lessons taught to them by their parents and the actual behaviors of many adults did not align. Youth had gained reason to question authority and traditional views of sexuality. In a time of contradictory messages about sexual morality, and often with a lack of education and frank discussions from parents, America's youth had to develop their own understanding of sexual normality. Through the Kinsey Reports, magazines, books, and newspapers, young people were told to question authority to determine who to trust (Littauer,

2015). In the decades following, questioning and challenging authority became a key aspect of youth culture.

Fictional Representations of Social Change

In addition to the Kinsey Reports, there was also a rise in popularity in fictional literature, which depicted characters, especially women, in more explicit and less conforming social and sexual roles. One of the most influential and groundbreaking novels entitled *Peyton Place* (Metalious, 1956) sparked controversy, outrage, and intrigue across the country. As the plotline followed its characters throughout different parts of their lives, it included many topics considered taboo, including rape, incest, abortion, domestic violence, and unwed motherhood, during a time period when many Americans wanted to return to the traditional, “normal” gender relations and families (Cameron, 2015; Freeman, 2008). The book’s significance, however, was not based solely in the fact that these topics were addressed; it was also due to the fact that in *Peyton Place*, each woman’s life circumstance and the adversities she faced were “linked to social indifference and economic and injustice, simultaneously political and private acts” (Cameron, 2015, p. 51). Through her novel, Grace Metalious intensified fears of social change in economy and the sexual behaviors of women.

Peyton Place was almost immediately a national sensation, selling 60,000 copies within the first ten days of its release in September. By Halloween, the number surged to more than 104,000 copies, and by the time the New Year is rung in, *Peyton Place* sets a publishing record: the fastest-selling novel ever published, the most profitable first novel in publishing history” (Cameron, 2015, p. 107). As the book’s popularity spread, so did its denunciation. After its release, towns and counties across the United States and countries all over the world banned *Peyton Place* from being sold. It was illegal to import it through the mail to countries such

Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the Soviet Union. Even in places that it was not banned, it was often difficult, if not impossible, for many to find a copy for themselves due to limited bookstores in smaller regions and limited funding for local libraries (Cameron, 2015).

Women who were able to obtain a copy would often hide it from their husbands, or parents, or families, and bound together to read it when they found the opportunity. For many readers, *Peyton Place*, although shocking, provided a familiar connection and “a glimpse into a somewhat frightening realm readers knew existed but could express in only a vague, inarticulate way” (Cameron, 2015, p. 30). Even through fictional representations, American women found themselves identifying with the discontentment and hardships, and the book provided readers a context in which to compare their own life circumstances and Americans’ eagerness to engage in such rebellious literature clearly signified a change in traditional morality (Cameron, 2015; Freeman, 2008). The following excerpt from Ardis Cameron’s *Unbuttoning America* (2015) describes how even fiction contributed to the social transitions occurring throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

With *Peyton Place*, such fears conjoined with images of the sexual chaos the novel supposedly represented, forming a perfect storm at the center of American cultural and social life. Wherever one looked – television, comic books, amusement parks, paperbacks – it seemed that the known world was under serious attack. How to explain not just the publication but the popularity of a novel in which patricide is condoned, female-headed households are normalized, bachelor girls with names like Steve live happily without men, oral sex and female lust are not just exposed but celebrated abortion and divorce are recognized, and, as one critic put it, ‘suicide and murder are presented in a context of justification.’ (Cameron, 2015, p. 112)

Two years after the release of *Peyton Place*, another novel, *The Best of Everything* (Jaffe, 1958), provided educated and/or working women a set of female characters with whom they could identify. The book centers on five professional women working in New York City at a publishing company. Similar to its predecessor, *Peyton Place*, *The Best of Everything* depicted women in non-traditional gender roles and its storyline that includes love, sex, happiness, and career goals as main topics, were still not commonly discussed in public forums. While the novel shocked some readers, it was a huge bestseller and women from all over would attend book signings and tell Rona Jaffe that reading *The Best of Everything* changed their lives (Jaffe, 2005).

Although these novels were not necessarily based on real-life women, they represented the cultural shift in sexuality, challenging the objective notion of non-sexuality. Female sexuality had long-since been a taboo topic, yet novels such as *Peyton Place* and *The Best of Everything* forced Americans to acknowledge that women were having sex, as it was now being openly discussed in very public contexts. In the following years, several non-fiction texts were released that caused an even larger uproar against traditional femininity, and provided women a voice to challenge cultural systems.

Liberating the Housewife

In 1963, a book was released that would shed light on the shifting cultural and social mindsets of postwar American housewives. Betty Friedan's "*The Feminine Mystique* has been credited, or blamed, for destroying, single-handedly and almost overnight, the 1950s consensus that women's place as in the home" (Coontz, 2011, p. xv). The 1960s are often considered a time of liberation in the United States. In 1963, the Civil Rights Movement had reached new heights and McCarthyism still cast a long shadow over America. On college campuses, students had

begun protesting restrictive policies, such as *in loco parentis*. “When it came to women, however, the laws, practices, and attitudes of 1963 had more in common with those of the first fifty years of the century than what was to come in the next twenty years” (Coontz, 2011, p. 5).

In most states, there were still a number of laws restricting women’s, particularly wives’, rights to property and assets. “Many states still had ‘head and master’ laws, affirming that the wife was subject to her husband” (Coontz, 2011, p. 5). There were no laws that prevented employers from asking women about their plans to have children to make hiring decisions, and no appeal against what we now call sexual harassment. Women continued to have little control over their sexual and reproductive health, with as many as 17 states restricting women’s access to contraception. “Every state in the union had ‘sodomy’ laws that criminalized sexual relations other than heterosexual intercourse” (Coontz, 2011, p. 11). Oral sex, even between married couples, could lead to a potential jail term of 14 years in prison in California. Even worse, the law did not recognize rape within marriage since it was assumed that once married, consent was implied for the rest of a woman’s married life. South Dakota was the first state to implement a law that made spousal rape a crime; and that did not occur until 1975. In many states, domestic violence was only taken seriously if a police officer observed the abuse, or if a victim’s injury necessitated a certain number of sutures, also known as the “stitch rule” (Coontz, 2011).

Women who had career goals outside of the home were discouraged those goals, and colleges and universities perpetuated the discouragement through women’s curriculum. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the concept of women’s curriculum at many colleges and universities was essentially based on the notion that women’s natural place was in the home as wives and mothers. They were responsible for the child bearing, and by extension the child rearing. Many believed that women who did not have well-adjusted, successful home lives

would not be happy. It was also not realistic, pro-women's curriculum folks would argue, for a man to contribute an equal amount to the housework and child rearing, as it would be too much of a burden in addition to their other occupations (Peril, 2006). As Friedan (1963) stated,

The one lesson a girl could hardly avoid learning, if she went to college between 1945 and 1960, was *not* to get interested, seriously interested, in anything besides getting married and having children, if she wanted to be normal, happy, adjusted, feminine, have a successful husband, successful children, and a normal, feminine, adjusted, successful sex life. (179)

These life lessons came from other female students, as well as college professors. Betty Friedan believed that the feminine mystique women experienced in the years after college “was promulgated by students who compared engagement rings and sweater patterns more frequently than class notes and career plans, and by professors who didn't challenge the assumption that the curriculum needed to be feminized” (Peril, 2006, pp. 206-207).

In an era of ideological domestic bliss, women found themselves unhappy and unfulfilled in their static roles of wives and mothers. Most women did not know how to articulate their dissatisfaction, especially since “America's psychiatrists, sociologists, women's magazines, and television shows had portrayed the postwar housewife as the happiest person on the planet” (Coontz, 2011, p. 22). Although women did not publicly discuss their discontentment, if one looked close enough, Friedan argued, they would see that women had been unhappy for quite some time.

So-called experts offered a variety of explanations for women's discontentment, including blaming higher education wasting women's time “with lofty academic studies they would never use instead of properly preparing them for marriage and motherhood” (Coontz,

2011, p. 23). Other explanations claimed that women were losing their femininity by desiring careers or that their dissatisfaction was rooted in sexual maladjustment. Friedan argued that all of these explanations only “perpetuated the mystique that surrounded the roles of the housewife and mother, denying women’s need for any other source of personal identity or meaning in their lives” (Coontz, 2011, p. 23). Many psychiatrists suggested that women could remedy the problem by achieving a more sexually satisfying life. Experts, the media, and their peers told women that the ultimate goal was marriage and children. Once these goals were achieved, women should have satisfied their needs and aspirations. When they continued to feel doubts, they were afraid to admit that, perhaps, they wanted more.

Until Friedan offered an alternative explanation to the psychiatric diagnosis of the “housewife syndrome,” women’s dissatisfaction was “an individual problem of sexual or gender maladjustment.” If women sought medical advice, they were often “treated by analysis, medication, or even electroshock therapy” (Coontz, 2011, p. 73). The solution to “the housewife syndrome” was not for a woman to change her life to gain satisfaction and a stronger sense of self, but rather to change her mindset and reconcile her feelings. Contrary to the current pressure to have it all that emerged in the 1980s (Brown, 1982; Collins 2009), women in the 1950s were told that they had to choose; they could be anything they wanted, or they could be happy (Coontz, 2011). As Stephanie Coontz (2011) stated in her analysis of *The Feminine Mystique*, the prevailing ideology of the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s told women,

You are free to choose... You can do anything you want and society will no longer try to stop you. But modern science has proven that if you do not first devote yourself to being a homemaker, you will probably end up desperately unhappy, and your choice may be sign that you already suffer from deep illness. (p. 75)

So women remained silent in their homes, under the impression that they were alone in their feelings. In 1963, however, Friedan's book finally provided an intellectual and emotional discourse for women who knew they were experiencing, but could not explain, feelings of guilt, depression, and hopelessness. "Friedan urged women to give thought to 'the unfeminine problems of the world outside the home,' to reclaim education and practical work in the world; not to concede to men the sole right 'to make major decisions'" (Horowitz, 2000, p. 487).

In the first chapter of *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan provides the prime theme that she continuously returns to throughout her text: "Women, like men, have the need and desire to find larger meaning in their lives" (Coontz, 2011, p. 24). The issue, as it became known, was the "problem that has no name" (Friedan, 1963, p. 19). After the release of her book and several articles in *Good Housekeeping* (Friedan, 1960), *Ladies' Home Journal* (Friedan, 1964), and *McCall's* (Friedan, 1971), numerous women wrote letters to the journals and to Friedan herself, thanking her for providing a context for their own feelings and for the realization that they were not alone. "*The Feminine Mystique*," as Gail Collins (2009) stated, "was like an earthquake compared to the tremors about unhappy housewives that had registered before" (p. 58).

Women who claimed they were unhappy were often told that they were denying their feminine instincts or not accepting their roles as wives. Some women had more positive experiences with their psychiatrists; yet, most of the women Coontz interviewed indicated "that the turning point in their lives came when they started seeing their anxiety as a legitimate social grievance rather than an individual problem" (2011, p. 85). *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) validated women's feelings of discontentment and unhappiness. For many it validated that they were not crazy, and that they were not alone.

The mid-twentieth century was very much a transitional period for women. It was, as Friedan pointed out, “a time of political conformity, cultural conservatism, social repressiveness, and female passivity” (Coontz, 2011, p. 59). During the first several decades of the twentieth century, women had fought and won for the right to vote, gained greater access to education, and broke down barriers preventing them from entering the public sphere. Friedan questioned how the individualistic and feminist ideologies of the early twentieth century had led to the “‘strange paradox’ of the 1950s and early 1960s, when just as professions finally were opening to women, the term ‘career woman’ became a dirty word” (Coontz, 2011, p. 36). Perhaps the fact that the cultural ideology forced women back into the home, yet continually blamed them for societal ills, exacerbated women’s dissatisfaction

There were increased cultural concerns regarding the supposed feminization of men. Simultaneously, many began to worry that a culture of leisure was undermining traditional work ethic. Regardless of the contradictions of these two problems, most agreed that women were to blame. “Even the mutually satisfying sex life that was supposed to be one of the rewards of conforming to the 1950s model of masculinity and femininity contributed to the sense of masculine crisis” (Coontz, 2011, p. 78). This crisis of masculinity was often blamed on women and the supposed power that wives exerted on their husbands. Women were making more demands – economically, sexually, and domestically. Men’s concerns now included satisfying their wives’ needs, including helping them around the house.

Many historians and feminists in the 1960s and 1970s criticized Friedan for failing to address men’s privilege in the home as well as the needs and concerns of working-class women, those who had to work out of necessity. The book concentrated almost entirely on middle-class, educated, white women. Betty Friedan continually regarded her approach to writing *The*

Feminine Mystique as one based upon her own experiences as a middle-class housewife. When the book was released in 1963, Friedan's life did reflect the suburban, educated, middle-class housewife; however, her past was significantly different (Coontz, 2011; Horowitz, 2000).

Daniel Horowitz (1998) completed an exhaustive study of Friedan's life, which included Left-wing radical activism throughout the 1930s and early 1940s when she was an undergraduate student at Smith College and a graduate student at the University of California Berkeley. Although she initially denied, or omitted record of, involvement in political activism, years after the release of *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan discussed her participation in radical activities focused on "African Americans, workers, the threat of war, anti-communism, and 'communist splits and schisms'" (Horowitz, 2000, p. 490). She was not, at this time, the least bit interested in women's issues. In 1952, however, after she became pregnant with her second child, Friedan was fired from her job and told that the pregnancy was her fault. She attempted to call a meeting in protest, but the other women were "embarrassed, and the men uncomprehending" (Horowitz, 2000, p. 490). Becoming pregnant was her fault, a personal matter, and there was no word for sex discrimination in 1949. When she discussed her involvement in Marxist discussion groups and political activism, Friedan distracted the reader with images of domestic life, beginning and ending her 1974 piece with references to the latter. The 1940s and 1950s were fully focused on the problem that has no name when she became fully immersed in domestic life and motherhood, forfeiting her career and participation in politics (Horowitz, 1998; Horowitz, 2000).

Although it is not entirely clear the reasons for her shift from Left-wing radicalism that included working-class women and minorities to middle-class, white women, there are two potential explanations for her shift in focus. Friedan might have "downplayed her ties to the Labor movement to the Left...because she had seen firsthand how the climate of guilt by

association during the Red Scare of the 1950s had derailed careers” (Coontz, 2011, p. 140).

Glossing over a large part of her life allowed Friedan to be taken seriously as a writer, and to avoid be discredited or blacklisted to due her prior connections to Left-wing activism.

Furthermore, “Friedan’s ability to portray herself as an apolitical suburban housewife allowed her to reach many women who shared her dissatisfactions but might never have bought the book had they known of her previous political associations” (Coontz, 2011, p. 142). Regardless of her reasons to exclude her past in her writings, Friedan failed to address the concerns of women that did not identify with the suburban housewife. These working-class women had a different text that spoke more to their personal experiences and concerns.

Helen Gurley Brown’s 1962 novel *Sex and the Single Girl* was written in a style that was “more accessible to women without a college education than Friedan’s book” (Coontz, 2011, p. 136). In a time when people seldom talked openly about virginity, sex, abortions, or sexual harassment, Brown promoted the idea that marriage should not be seen as the best year’s a woman’s life. Brown openly discussed the idea that women had the same sexual desires as men, and that they could, and should, use their sexuality to advance their careers and for material gain. Brown believed that single women could support themselves and have fulfilling sex lives, which was a startling proposition during that time (Collins, 2009).

“Jennifer Scanlon, a professor at Bowdoin College, argues that Brown was ‘a feminist trailblazer’ who did for young white working-class women what Friedan did for middle-class suburban wives” (Coontz, 2011, p. 137). Brown encouraged women to use their femininity to earn promotions at work and receive treats and luxuries outside of the office that they could not otherwise afford. She believed that women should manipulate gender and sexual stereotypes to their advantage. This may have been “satisfying, even empowering, to individual women,” but

“it can set back equality for other women reinforcing those stereotypes” (Coontz, 2011, p. 137).

Regardless of the potential setback, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) at least provided unique insight into possible mindsets of working-class women, and most certainly pushed the sexual boundaries of the early 1960s.

These books were not necessarily a “call for women to bound together to improve their legal and political rights” (Coontz, 2011, p. 33); however, each of these authors offered women a voice, a way to articulate feelings they could not express. The women who related to Friedan and Brown’s texts were not the sexual revolutionists of the late 1960s. Nevertheless, they were part of a spark that ignited the country into a full-blown sexual revolution.

CHAPTER 6

The Fight for Reproductive Rights

In 1960, the FDA officially approved the birth control pill, also known as the Pill, to be sold in the United States. Due to its symbolic role throughout the 1960s, “the Pill frequently appears in discussions (both then and now) as a sort of *deus ex machine*, bringing about the sexual revolution” [emphasis in text] (Bailey, 1999, p. 106). The FDA approval of the Pill was not the first time America had heard of or discussed birth control. Two women, “birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger and wealthy women’s rights activist Katharine McCormick” (May, 2010, p. 14) fought and advocated for decades for women’s access to safe and effective contraception. They believed that women would not be able to achieve total equality until they had full control of their reproductive lives. It was not women’s equality, however, that eventually led to the approval of the Pill. During the first half of the twentieth century, the fight for the Pill intersected with several other movements, which offered justification for its release besides reproductive control and sexual satisfaction.

In the early twentieth century, advocacy for birth control was closely tied to the eugenics movement, “which sought to limit childbearing among people the eugenicists deemed genetically and racially inferior and so preserve the dominance of white, Anglo-Saxon Americans” (Bailey, 1999, p. 109). Also during this time, women’s right activists, including Sanger and McCormick, fought for the right to vote as well as “equality in marriage, access to divorce, and the right to engage in or refuse sex and reproduction” (May, 2010, p. 17). These two movements provided an early foundation for birth control advocacy, especially since sexual mores within America were still strictly tied to sexual intimacy within marriage.

The focus of early requests for contraception access was not one of revolutionary intent, rather the desire to control reproduction within the confines of marriage. Widespread access to birth control was a gradual process, as poor and single women had a difficult time obtaining it due to limited funding and restrictive doctors. The eventual approval of the Pill for all women came about as a byproduct of two movements unrelated to sexual freedom. The concern over population growth and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society, which "used federal funds and programs to attack the causes and consequences of poverty and racism in the United States," (Bailey, 1999, p. 107) provided rationale for increased access to the pill.

Many early birth control advocates believed "that the tiny pill promised to end human misery and eradicate the causes of war by controlling population" (May, 2010, p. 35). After the end of World War II, Americans were marrying younger and having more children. This baby boom and postwar marriage culture led to the use of contraceptive as less threatening; if women were having several children while still in their twenties, using birth control would not be denying their biological identity (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). Furthermore, years prior to the release of the Pill, "population control advocates saw contraception as the key to development, prosperity, and the success of democracy and capitalism in developing countries- and the best means to avoid, war, famine, and the spread of communism" (May, 2010, p. 41). In contrast, anticommunist crusaders, including Senator Joseph McCarthy, believed that the Pill and population control were "part of a communist plot to weaken the country and spread immorality" (May, 2010, p. 41).

The U.S. government was initially reluctant to provide funding for family planning programs or contraception; these forms of reproductive services were not considered government issues. Opinions changed, however, as fear of overpopulation and increased poverty manifested

within American society and caused the federal government to review and revise policies regarding the accessibility to birth control (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; May, 2010). Without government involvement, there were no family planning “methods acceptable, feasible, and efficacious enough to meet the needs of the economically underdeveloped areas” (Hauser, 1965, p. 374). This led to the establishment of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

In 1942, in response to the need to limit family size during the Great Depression, the former Birth Control Federation of America established the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Stanger opposed the name change because she believed that the term planning detracted from the woman-empowering aspect of birth control. The terms family planning and population control “were often used interchangeably were often used interchangeably, but they did not mean the same thing. Family planning emphasized individual choice, whereas population control focused on large-scale reduction of fertility rates” (May, 2010, p. 39). As Philip M. Hauser, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago and director of the Population Research and Training Center, stated at in a hearing on population crisis in 1965,

There are only two ways to dampen world population increase. One is to increase the death rate and the other is to decrease the birth rate. There are no nations or cultures in the world prepared to accept an increase in mortality as a way of controlling population growth. In consequence, only the control of fertility remains as a way to check population increase. (p. 374)

This reinforces the notion that the availability of birth control was not tied to women’s liberation, rather a means to regulate reproduction to benefit the world population.

The goals of Planned Parenthood included “strengthening the family by making it possible to plan the timing and spacing of children and by liberating female sexuality in

marriage” (May, 2010, p. 20). From 1930 to 1942, the number of birth control clinics in America rose from 55 to 800. Wartime brought a new rationale for family planning as a scientific approach to national security (May, 2010). By the end of World War II, American society began to change. The Planned Parenthood Federation shared a message that accurately conveyed the changing sexual and social mores of postwar America. The Federation advocated birth control, specifying the necessity of birth control in family planning and ensuring the health and well-being of children and parents (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; May, 2010). Funding for such programs continued to grow over the next several decades. “Between 1965 and 1969 government funding for domestic family planning programs grew from \$8.6 billion to \$56.3 billion” (May, 2010, p. 43). This did not mean, however, that there was not continued resistance to contraception access.

For decades, various laws prohibited access to birth control for women. One of the first of these laws was the Comstock Law. In 1873, the Comstock law, named after Anthony Comstock, “equated birth control with pornography and prohibited all contraceptive information and devices from being sent via the U.S. mail” (May, 2010, p. 16). Comstock was part of a larger movement, made up mostly of medical professions who sought to control the process of pregnancy and births. The law was in effect until 1936 when the *United States v. One Package*, a case brought forth by Margaret Sanger, overturned it (May, 2010). After the lifting of the Comstock Law and the release of the birth control pill, additional laws and policies restricted certain women’s access to contraception.

When the Pill was first released, there were 30 states that “had laws restricting the sale or advertising of virtually anything related to birth control” (Collins, 2009, p. 159). For example, in Connecticut, anyone that used, bought, or helped someone to obtain any type of birth control

could be sentenced up to a year in prison. Furthermore, during the 1960s, the age of adulthood was 21 in most states, and “it was illegal for a doctor to prescribe birth control to an unmarried woman under that age without a parent’s consent” (Collins, 2009, p. 162). These restrictions made it difficult for many women to gain access to contraception.

Even as these laws were lifted, additional policies and regulations at clinics and universities limited access to contraception for many women. In 1966, the University of Kansas (KU) held a forum on birth control. Dr. Raymond Schwegler, director of KU’s student health service, stated that he would not allow contraception to be made available to unmarried women. Shortly after his declaration, students sent a flood of letters to the *University Daily Kansan* newspaper, both in support of and against the policy. Although the letters used a language of morality, most did not directly address sexual morality. There was no argument in any of the letters or in public debates addressing “the rights of women to control their own bodies” (Bailey, 1999, p. 117). Women wanted access to birth control, however, they were hesitant to express their desires for liberation and sexual freedom.

As the Pill became more widely accepted, older generations believed that it was to blame “for what they saw as a frightening upsurge in premarital sex” (Collins, 2009, p. 159). Concerns over immorality in larger society often prevented single women from obtaining prescriptions. Single women who did seek a prescription for the Pill made a somewhat public statement about sexuality. If she planned on remaining a virgin until marriage, why would she need birth control? If she did choose to go to the doctor, she risked “refusal, embarrassment, even lectures on morality and appropriate behavior” (Bailey, 1999, p. 121). Some women fabricated stories in order to receive a prescription, including wearing fake rings, claiming it was preparation for upcoming nuptials, or stating they the Pill needed to regulate their periods.

Although women's liberation was not the focus of early campaigns for the Pill, it did provide women a foundation for increased sexual freedom. Even with some restrictions, middle-class married women had little trouble obtaining a prescription from doctors for the Pill (Collins, 2009; May, 2010). For the first time, birth control provided an effective and affordable option for contraception that separated sexual separated from reproduction. Sexual satisfaction within marriage became a critical aspect of a happy, successful marriage. Birth control allowed married couples to experience open sexual intimacy without the fear of pregnancy. There were advantages for both women and men. Women gained the autonomy to control reproduction. Men no longer had to worry about the awkward withdrawal method or fumbling with condoms. Furthermore, without the fear of pregnancy, women became more eager and responsive partners (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; May, 2010).

The Pill also challenged deeply rooted sexual and social codes and attitudes. It provided women liberation and freedom to engage in sexual acts more freely without the fear of pregnancy (May, 2010). The Pill also provided women more confidence in her ability to plan and pursue a career. "Once women had confidence that they could make it through training and the early years in their profession without getting pregnant, their attitude toward careers that required long-term commitment changed" (Collins, 2009, p. 102). By the 1960s, many men also participated in the fight for contraceptive access and sexual liberation. Their concern, however, was not necessarily the reproductive consequences or women's liberation, rather the possibility of breaking "down barriers of prudery and restraint" (May, 2010, p. 59). Women might have been more likely to engage in sexual activity with men if they did not have the fear of becoming pregnant.

As D'Emilio and Freedman (1988) state, "Birth control offers perhaps the most dramatic example of the change that occurred in American sexual mores during the middle of the twentieth century" (p. 243). For several decades, laws and restrictions prevented widespread access. The focus of public discourse on the topic of contraception was "on the immorality of premarital sex," not "on the morality of existential choice" (Bailey, 1999, p.117). It was not until the 1970s that single women had unlimited access to the Pill (Collins, 2009). As previously mentioned, the early advocates for the Pill did not view it as a potential route to "women's emancipation, but rather a miracle drug that would solve the world's problems" (May, 2010, p. 34). By the end of 1960s, however, "women were beginning to speak out against the discrimination and oppression they saw in virtually all aspects of society" and by the 1970s, "the women's movement captured the Pill, in both its symbolic and its physical manifestations" (Bailey, 1999, p. 126).

Access to contraception was not the only struggle in the fight for women's control over reproduction. Even with widespread acceptance of the pill and other forms of contraception, abortion remained not only socially unacceptable, but also illegal. Due to the illegality, it is impossible to determine the exact numbers of abortions that were performed during the first half of the twentieth century; however, the national director of Planned Parenthood estimated that approximately 2000 abortions took place each day, with the majority being performed on married women during the 1950s. Since it was illegal outside of therapeutic abortions (when the mother's life was at risk), most abortions were occurring in an underground system. Licensed physicians, who may or may not have hidden the offering of such a service from authorities, performed some of the illegal abortions (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). A vast majority occurred

in “a thriving underworld of ‘back-alley’ abortionists” that “catered to the needs of women desperate to terminate a pregnancy” (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 254).

“By the 1960s, police experts called abortion the third-largest criminal activity in the country, surpassed only by narcotics and gambling” (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 253). Access to information about safe abortion services was limited. Women often had to ask around, to friends, husbands, doctors, or co-workers, to learn of the secret information. Class status impacted the availability of this information. Younger women, nonwhites, and poor women had very limited access to information and, therefore, faced the most dangerous conditions. “That so many women braved this illegal, hazardous terrain suggests the determination with which they sought to control their fertility” (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 255). It was these types of illegal procedures that fueled Margaret Sanger’s crusade for the Pill. As a nurse, Sanger “encountered many women who became sick and died from illegal abortions, or, like her mother, simply having too many children” (May, 2010, p. 17).

Another disturbing aspect of the “contraceptive revolution” is the use of forced sterilization. Although a small number, some women – generally poor, uneducated, and “frequently with some form of delinquency – were subjected to forced surgery under legal authority,” called tubal ligation (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 255). For example, according to D’Emilio and Freedman (1988), a doctor in the southwest would lie to patients, telling them her that her uterus needed to come out, even though it did not, because he felt that she had too many kids. These women were sterilized without their consent or proper knowledge of their medical needs because their reproductive habits offended others’ (doctors) values.¹

¹ Forced sterilization has much deeper implications for specific impoverished, racial, and incarcerated populations that cannot be covered under the scope of this paper. For more information, please reference (Bruinius, 2007).

The fight for equal access to birth control, in many ways, went hand in hand with the fight for abortion rights. As birth control advocates, many white, middle-class feminists believed that abortion rights were significantly important, and that abortion was a necessary measure of last resort for unintended pregnancy. “Without that option, women’s efforts to plan their lives, to set priorities, and to make choices were severely constrained, and constrained ways that men’s were not” (De Hart & Kerber, 2000, p. 21). In the years following the FDA’s approval of the Pill, sexual activity among single women continued to increase. Then, in 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in the landmark case *Roe v. Wade* “that any attempt to interfere with a woman’s right to abortion during the first three months of pregnancy was a violation of her constitutional right to privacy” (Collins, 2009, p. 234). More easily and equitable access to birth control and abortions do not solely characterize the sexual revolution; however, each issue is symbolic of the continual change in American sexual mores that had started decades prior to the 1960s (Bailey, 1999; May, 2010).

CHAPTER 7

Beginning of the Revolution

In 1968, the *New York Times* featured a story about a female Barnard College student cohabitating with her boyfriend in off-campus housing. Upon learning of the story, Barnard authorities identified the student as Linda LeClair. When confronted, rather than apologize, LeClair accused the college of enforcing discriminatory policies and “implied that the college was guilty of hypocrisy” (Rosenberg, 2004, p. 237), and she and her boyfriend, Peter Behr, a student at Columbia, joined the anti-parietal movement at Barnard College, where they demanded changes in policies. The case was brought to a faculty-student judicial council, and after five hours of deliberation, the committee determined that as punishment, LeClair would be banned from the snack bar, cafeteria, and student lounge. Barnard alumnae did not feel this punishment was adequate and expressed their concerns to Barnard president, Martha Peterson. Peterson contemplated how to handle the situation as she was “torn between respecting the committee’s decision and show the college’s donors that she was not going to let the matter drop” (Collins, 2009, p. 150). By May, Peterson hinted strongly that she wanted to LeClair to go away; that her enrollment at Barnard no longer served a purpose. She indicated that her final decision, however, was based solely on the final grades of the student, as LeClair was on academic probation, and not on the basis of sex (Collins, 2009; Rosenberg, 2004).

Linda LeClair ultimately dropped out of Barnard College, but her story symbolizes the dramatic changes and direct defiance that were occurring on college campuses across the country. The Linda LeClair Affair represented a growing intolerance of the double standard that had persisted for so long (Bailey, 1999; Collins, 2009; Rosenberg, 2004). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, it became increasingly obvious that women were no longer willing to tolerate the

double standard. Although there is not a definitive beginning, campus protests, activist movements, and the creation of sexual subcultures all contributed to the social uprising commonly known as the sexual revolution (Bailey, 1999; Collins, 2009).

In the decades leading up to LeClair's scandalous choice in living arrangements, women had been somewhat less overtly challenging authorities and policies. Government officials, military and local officers, and educational and social reform authorities utilized a variety of strategies throughout the twentieth century in an attempt to regulate female sexuality. Although their justifications for control changed to meet the societal needs, social and moral authorities underlying motivation was always the same: to control female sexual behavior.

During World War II, new restrictions and laws were created in an attempt to eradicate venereal disease. Since women were responsible for setting sexual limitations and, therefore, to blame for the spread of VD, they were considered one of the greatest threats to public health, and more specifically the health of servicemen; thus, promiscuity was a direct threat to the American's safety. ASHA and other government agencies implemented a variety of policies that restricted women's rights, including the May Act (1941) and the Eight Point Agreement (1948). These policies provided new guidelines for women diagnosed with a venereal disease and brought promiscuity under the same designation as prostitution. Women, however, continued to engage in sexual acts with servicemen, either through illegal promiscuous behavior or as hostesses at USO clubs (Hegarty, 2008; Littauer, 2015; Winchell, 2008). Meanwhile, youth culture in the United States was changing.

Early twentieth century courtship adhered to traditional standards known as calling, which took place primarily in the young girl's home. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, dating and calling moved to the public sphere in a new tradition known as going steady.

These changes brought newfound freedom for teenagers to explore sexuality. There was, however, still a sexual double standard. Girls faced a contradictory set of sexual standards: to be popular, they had to engage in a certain level of sexual behavior, but they could not go too far or they risked a tainted reputation (Bailey, 1988; Spurlock, 2016). Premarital sex remained strictly prohibited, and educational authorities attempted to maintain this sexual standard by incorporating a family life education approach, which reinforced traditional gender roles for males and females (Freeman, 2008; Moran, 2000). Even though teenagers had limited access to information about sex and schools utilized fear tactics, young women and men continued to engage in increasingly liberal sexual behavior.

Postwar culture forced many women back into the home, where they could return to their traditional roles as wives and mothers. It was not long until women found themselves unhappy and unsatisfied in these roles. Fictional novels, such as *Peyton Place* (1956) and *The Best of Everything* (1958), and fictional works, such as *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) and *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), sparked a discourse amongst American women, and allowed them to begin discussing their discontentment (Coontz, 2011). Gradually, women began challenging the outdated, restrictive social norms that had controlled their behavior for too long. The fight for reproductive rights, including the Pill and abortions, contributed to the social upheaval that came to be known as the sexual revolution. The Pill in particular is often historically positioned as a central aspect “to the behavioral and cultural changes that make up what we still call the sexual revolution” (Bailey, 1997, p. 827).

The increased tension between private matters and public rules was a key component in every transition in social and sexual norms. Cultural ideologies and various forms of authority attempted to confine sexual matters within the private sphere. As women continued to challenge

authority and question traditional standards, the lines that defined sexual boundaries and gender roles became increasingly ambiguous (Bailey, 1994). I argue that it was “a complex web of structural changes that were remaking American society” (Bailey, 1997), and that the sexual revolution did not occur from a single act or a sudden explosion in sexuality; rather from women’s continuous challenges against authorities and pushing the boundaries of sexual and social standards.

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